

agrees to provide small amounts of additional funding under a standard, renewal, or continuation grant as specified in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) of this section and may involve a short-term (usually six months or less) extension of the project period beyond that approved in an original or amended award, but in no case may the cumulative period of the project, including short term extensions, exceed the statutory time limitation. A supplement is awarded only if required to assure adequate completion of the original scope of work and if there is sufficient justification of need to warrant such action. A request of this nature normally does not require additional peer review.

(d) *Obligation of the Federal government.* Neither the approval of any application nor the award of any research project grant shall commit or obligate the United States in any way to make any renewal, supplemental, continuation, or other award with respect to any approved application or portion of an approved application.

§ 3401.9 Use of funds; changes.

(a) *Delegation of fiscal responsibility.* The grantee may not delegate or transfer in whole or in part, to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of grant funds.

(b) *Change in project plans.* (1) The permissible changes by the grantee, principal investigator(s), or other key project personnel in the approved research project grant shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the projects' approved goals. If the grantee or the principal investigator(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question shall be referred to the Administrator for a final determination.

(2) Changes in approved goals, or objectives, shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the Department prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

(3) Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the Department prior to effecting such changes.

(4) Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the Department prior to effecting such changes, except as may be allowed in the terms and conditions of a grant award.

(c) *Changes in project period.* The project period determined pursuant to § 3401.7(b) may be extended by the Administrator without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the Administrator determines may be necessary to complete, or fulfill the purposes of, an approved project. Any extension, when combined with the originally approved or amended project period, shall be conditioned upon prior request by the grantee and approval in writing by the Department, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of a grant award.

(d) *Changes in approved budget.* The terms and conditions of a grant will prescribe circumstances under which written Departmental approval will be requested and obtained prior to instituting changes in an approved budget.

§ 3401.10 Other Federal statutes and regulations that apply.

Several other Federal statutes and/or regulations apply to grant proposals considered for review or to research project grants awarded under this part. These include but are not limited to:

- 7 CFR Part 1c—USDA implementation of the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects;
- 7 CFR Part 1.1—USDA implementation of Freedom of Information Act;
- 7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-129 regarding debt collection;
- 7 CFR Part 15, Subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- 7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., Circular Nos. A-110, A-21, and A-122) and incorporating provisions of

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- 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly, the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance;
- 7 CFR Part 3017, as amended—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants);
- 7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of New Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes new prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans;
- 7 CFR Part 3019—USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations;
- 7 CFR Part 3051—Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Institutions;
- 7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act;
- 29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15B (USDA implementation of statute)—prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs; and
- 35 U.S.C. 200 *et seq.*—Bayh-Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR part 401).

§ 3401.11 Other conditions.

The Administrator may, with respect to any research project grant or to any class of awards, impose additional conditions prior to or at the time of any award when, in the Administrator's judgment, such conditions are necessary to assure or protect advancement of the approved project, the interests of the public, or the conservation of grant funds.

Subpart B—Scientific Peer Review of Research Applications for Funding

§ 3401.12 Establishment and operation of peer review groups.

Subject to § 3401.7, the Administrator will adopt procedures for the conduct of peer reviews and the formulation of recommendations under § 3401.16.

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§ 3401.13 Composition of peer review groups.

Peer review group members will be selected based upon their training or experience in relevant scientific or technical fields, taking into account the following factors:

- (a) The level of formal scientific or technical education by the individual;
- (b) The extent to which the individual has engaged in relevant research, the capacities in which the individual has done so (e.g., principal investigator, assistant), and the quality of such research;
- (c) Professional recognition as reflected by awards and other honors received from scientific and professional organizations outside of the Department;
- (d) The need of the group to include within its membership experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific or technical fields;
- (e) The need of the group to include within its membership experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., universities, industry, private consultant(s)) and geographic locations; and
- (f) The need of the group to maintain a balanced membership, e.g., minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution.

§ 3401.14 Conflicts of interest.

Members of peer review groups covered by this part are subject to relevant provisions contained in Title 18 of the United States Code relating to criminal activity, Department regulations governing employee responsibilities and conduct (part 0 of this title), and Executive Order 11222 (3 CFR, 1964-1965 Comp., p. 306), as amended.

§ 3401.15 Availability of information.

Information regarding the peer review process will be made available to the extent permitted under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a.), and implementing Departmental regulations (part 1 of this title).

§ 3401.16 Proposal review.

- (a) All research Applications for Funding will be acknowledged. Prior to technical examination, a preliminary review will be made for responsiveness